



MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Media Registration Policy

The purpose of this policy is to accommodate members of the media in reporting daily legislative action while minimizing any potential disruption to daily legislative proceedings. The following policy applies to media, as specified, while covering the proceedings of the Montana Senate and House of Representatives during the 64th Legislative Session.

Credentialing Criteria

1. Individuals must be employed by a commercial or non-profit news outlet providing print journalism (newspapers and magazines), broadcast journalism (radio or television), wire and news services for redistribution to other news organizations, or online news services (electronic dissemination rather than conventional print and broadcast distribution).
2. Credentials will be issued only to authorized representatives of the entities noted above and are not transferable.
3. Credentials will not be issued to individuals for the purpose of writing a personal online blog.
4. Credentials will not be issued to organizations or associations that register as lobbyists.

Process to Obtain Credentials

1. If the applicant meets credentialing criteria, they may submit a letter of introduction, along with the Media Registration Form, on official letterhead from the sponsoring news outlet to the Legislative Audio-Video Coordinator, or designated proxy, Room 173 of the Capitol. Photo identification will be required for approval.
2. If approval is granted, individuals may then present the signed Media Registration Form along with payment of \$10 to the General Services Division (GSD), Old Livestock Building, Room 208, 1310 E. Lockey Street, Helena. A photo will be taken of the individual and access pass granted. GSD's regular business hours are 8 a.m. - noon and 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. weekdays. They are closed on state holidays during the legislative session (January 19 & February 16).
3. Access badge must be worn at all times while in the Capitol.

Provisions for Use of Credentials

1. Members of the media are required to attend media orientation and/or meet directly with the Sergeant-at-Arms for Chamber decorum and emergency procedures prior to floor access.
2. Members of the media must adhere to the Floor Session Dress Code.
3. Access to the Senate and House chambers is a privilege guided by the discretion of the presiding officers in each chamber.
4. Members of the media are asked to use the side entrance to the chamber and refrain from using the center aisle of the chamber.
5. Members of the media are not permitted to approach and address a legislator in the chamber during a daily session, two hours prior to the session, and two hours after the session.
6. Members of the media are not permitted to leave material on legislators' desks in the chambers unless it has been approved. Permission may be granted through the Sergeant-at-Arms.
7. Cell phones must be in silent mode when accessing either chamber or committee rooms.
8. Food and drink (other than water) is prohibited in either chamber or committee rooms.

9. Decorum is defined as behavior or activities on the chamber floor that demonstrate respect for the legislative institution and process and for legislators' attention to the activities of the floor session. Inappropriate behavior may be cause for removal from the chamber floor and potential loss of privileges.

House Conditions

1. When the House is in session, video crews and still photographers may set up tripods on the east side of the chamber along the windows by the fire tower exit. Do not block the fire tower exit.
2. All media feed jacks are available on a first-come first-served basis; they may not be reserved. Splitters are often available from the Sergeant-at-Arms.
3. Permission must be granted from the Sergeant-at-Arms in order to set up tripods or shoot from other areas of the chamber floors.
4. Media access may be limited to specified areas and, when the specified space is occupied, access to the floor may be denied. Media may monitor proceedings from the public galleries.

Senate Conditions

1. In the Senate chamber, there are two areas with audio feeds for the media. In the front of the upper gallery (the southwest front corner), there is an area reserved for reporters. It includes a small table, a bench for seating, and audio feeds for equipment.
2. On the south side of the Senate floor by the cloakroom, there are additional audio feeds for TV media that allow same-level camera angles. If you use a tripod on the floor, please stay in this area and be considerate of legislators who are seated along this side. Do not block the aisle or infringe upon their desk space in any way.
3. You may also set up camera tripods in the gallery areas at the handicap rails (if they are not in use) or at the area of the gallery that is reserved for media.
4. Media access is limited to specified areas and, when the specified space is occupied, access to the floor may be denied. Media may monitor proceedings from the public galleries. Accommodations have been made in the Senate gallery for audio feeds.

Committee Rooms

1. The presiding officer of each committee is responsible for maintaining order during hearings. This includes designating areas of the hearing room where you can operate television, radio, or any other form of telecommunication equipment.
2. Hearing schedules are available online and at the Session Information Desk located in the central lobby on the first floor of the Capitol.
3. Members of the media are asked to arrive early, quietly set up, and refrain from placing microphones or other recording devices on the podium.

Role of Legislative Service Office & House Chief Clerk & Secretary of the Senate

1. In order to provide a convenient, full-time contact for the media, the Legislative Communications Office will serve as liaison between the media and the House Chief Clerk and Secretary of the Senate. However, the Senate and the House of Representatives each govern their own chambers, and concerns regarding the policies and procedures of each body should be brought to the attention of the Secretary of the Senate and House Chief Clerk for resolution.